

Singapore, 14 December 2012

PRESS RELEASE

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Laila Azra: Material Garden Wednesday, 23 - Sunday, 27 January 2013



Element Art Space is pleased to announce Laila Azra (Indonesia/Singapore) first showcase in Art Stage Singapore 2013 titled *Material Garden* which will open on Wednesday, 23 January 2013, in Booth B5-01IP.

In *Material Garden*, Laila Azra attempts to define money and obscures its monetary value by using them to define human relationships with money and each other. She refers to this installation as a 'community project,' where she employed under-privileged women and turned the Garden into a place of exchange—a place to give (by donating the bank notes or by buying the installation itself) and take (the underprivileged women receiving income). The bills, disguised as flowers, represent the monetary upside that allows our lifestyle today. Yet as we look up to the ceiling and awed by the beauty and intimacy of the flowers, we are reminded that earthly treasures are pointless if we do not enjoy them and be thankful to God--the 'force' that gives us our results.

At first glance, *Material Garden* will appear to be a forest that looks comforting and inviting as the plants dominate the walls and ceiling of the booth. However, as the viewers walk closer, they will notice that the plants, which are supposed to release oxygen to help them breathe, are in fact money—one of the most essential parts of their lives which can give power and influence to those who possess it. Instead of breathing in oxygen, the viewers will inhale the scent of money. Some may enjoy the serenity but some may be inspired to do something. They may be inspired to do a good deed and donate, or it may fuel their lust for more money. By mystifying the audience's sight, touch and smell senses, Azra invites them to question the pursuit of money.

The visual installation will exhibit in Art Stage Singapore until 27 January 2013.